

and unsurpassed virtue places her beyond comparison with any other. This may be the reason the name Mary holds so great a charm for us. Association with the pure and lovely character has lent to it an unusual sweetness and celestial fragrance.

Not many incidents of the sweet ministry of the devoted Mary, are told in the Bible, but what few are given speak with deep significance a true devotion to God.

Such was Mary's beautiful anointing of Jesus. Four similar accounts are given of the anointing—one in the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew, another in the fourteenth of Mark, a third in the seventh of Luke, and the last is found in the twelfth chapter of John. Some believe these to be accounts of one and the same act, that of Mary, while others believe them to be accounts of three different anointings by three different persons. But the view most generally entertained is that these were two anointings, one by the penitent sinner of Galilee, Mary Magdalene, the other by a totally different person, the saintly Mary of Bethany. Luke records that of Mary Magdalene, the other three Evangelists, that of Mary, the sister of Martha. 'Tis the story of a heart in its supreme moment, when the gratitude of an adoring soul must find expression; when the impassioned devotion of a pure and loving heart reveals itself to Him who is absolute Purity and Love. 'Tis the spirit of worship that has touched her inmost soul. God grant to us all this divine standard of true worship! Then will not our souls likewise receive and rejoice in the words "she hath done what she could"?

To both sisters was given the great joy and honor of ministering to Jesus in their own home. It was during one of these visits, that we are given another insight of the beautiful soul of Mary. Her devotion is so complete that she quite forgets the homelier tasks, of which neglect her sister complains. With Potter, I don't believe in holding Martha up to fine scorn as a worldly-minded creature and exalt Mary for an indifference to the duties of hospitality. For ought we know, Mary may at various times have been quite as zealous as her sister; but while Jesus is there she seizes the precious opportunity to sit at his feet. She had learned the eternal truth of the words of her Lord, "The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment." I love Mary in her fine spiritual outlook of life, for her truer vision of the Highest.

There is yet one other scene where I love to linger with Mary. It is at the house of mourning. Lazarus has been dead four days. Jesus is coming. Martha finds her sister and says, "The Master is here and call-eth thee." What a world of tenderness in those words! His deep concern shows a special love for individuals.

But these are thoughts that have to do more directly with the life of Jesus, than with the life of Mary. True, they show us the human side of His nature, and this visit

is an occasion when the humanity of Jesus is revealed to a marked degree. After all, is it not association with Jesus that has given to Mary's life anything worth writing about? It is because she came in close touch with Him, because her life pulses beat in harmony with His, that her life was so rich and beautiful.

"Near to God so near,  
She could not nearer be,  
For in the presence of His Son  
She was as near as He."

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#### Hannah

My favorite character among the women of the Bible is that loved and loving mother, Hannah. I love her because she was prayerful, trustful and consecrated in her religious life and because she was a noble, devoted mother.

We find many beautiful examples of womanhood in Hebrew history. None has entwined with it a prettier illustration of simple trust in God and a sweeter story of answered prayer than the life of Hannah furnishes. A lesson in effectual prayer is to be learned from her life. We are told that she "spoke in her heart." Otherwise it could not have been a powerful prayer. O, that there were more mothers who would lay hold on God as did Hannah! Such faith would produce ideal homes.

Hannah's consecration is exemplary to all Christian mothers. There are not enough mothers setting their children apart for the Lord's service. And there are consequently too few men and women of the saintly character that marked Samuel. I think it was Theodore Cuyler who said, "Show me the mother and I will show you the son." I can think of no instance in which the saying is more applicable than in the life of Hannah and her child Samuel. The influence of motherhood is deeply emphasized in Hannah's character. Hers is an incalculable power. When rightly directed it brings glory to God and blessings to men.

Every mother's heart must be touched by the devotedness of Hannah to her child. How lovingly she remembered the darling child in the care of Eli, but in a larger sense in her own care. And how tenderly she wove little garments for him and carried them to him. It is hard to realize the loneliness the separation from her child must have caused Hannah. But she realized that the child was God's, as is every child, and that he was lent her for bettering the world.

The trustful heart that surrendered a mother's joy because the service of God was first in her life still beats feelingly near to us and makes Hannah's character dear and influential in our lives.

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#### The Virgin Mary

If one looks for perfection in a favorite, than Mary, the mother of Christ, must be one's favorite Bible woman. That she was

born in sin must be admitted, but by a special dispensation of grace I believe she must have been preserved from sinning in her own person, that she might be worthy to be the mother of our Lord. In the doctrine of her absolute sinlessness I have no belief, but that she was able to overcome sin and remain pure and holy in thought and deed is a blessed conviction to those who see in her an ideal for perfect living.

We are told so little of her that our opinion must be sustained quite as much by inference as by an actual knowledge of facts. That she was a perfect woman may be inferred from the salutation of the angel in the Annunciation: "Hail, thou art highly favored, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God." Then, when she fully understood her mission, in the meekness and humility of her perfect womanhood, she resigned her spirit to the divine will in the words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." That she really had a prophetic appreciation of His mission is evident from her words to Elizabeth when she visited her and gave expression to her exaltation of soul.

One proof of her superior wisdom and discretion lies in the fact that, knowing His mission as she did, and treasuring in heart all the strange things that were revealed to her, she performed all the ordinary duties of the mother evidently without fuss or parade or tattle. With the certain knowledge of coming wonders, tho probably ignorant of the awful tragedy that should enter her life, she lived her simple, uneventful life in an obscure village, following the ordinary round of duties common to people of her class, ministering to her household as other women minister to theirs, surrounding her Son with motherly love and attentions. Those must have been long, long years of unquestioning faith, of silent waiting—for what? For those last three years of service. Thru all those years she was with Him in soul, rejoicing and sorrowing, feeling what only a mother can feel, her gentle heart torn with conflicting emotions as she realized the divine purpose of His will, and saw the worshipful love of the lowly whom He served, and the fierce hate of the powerful whom He reproved. Lovingly, faithfully, the mother's heart followed Him till the cruel journey brought her to the foot of the cross. No pen can ever tell what she, the mother of the Divine One, must have suffered there as she looked upon His agony. His words to John may have fallen upon her broken heart like a gentle benediction, and the love of the best loved disciple must have sustained, as far as possible, her bruised soul in its darkest hour of supreme suffering.

To the end of time, every loving mother's heart must throb with love and sympathy for her who gave her all to be the sacrifice for sin, the Savior of mankind. As the mother of the Savior we reverence her, and in her